Target for agricultural growth

*285. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have set a target to increase the annual growth rate of agricultural production by more than 6.5 per cent for coming years;

(b) if so, the details of measures taken or proposed to be taken for increasing growth of agricultural products in the country; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) No, Sir. In its Mid-Term appraisal of .the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007), the Planning Commission has projected growth of GDP at 2001-02 prices in agriculture, including allied sectors of forestry and logging, and fishing, at 4.0 per cent and 3.2 per cent during 2005-06 and 2006-07 respectively.

(b) and (c) As indicated in the Mid-Term Appraisal of the Tenth Plan, the growth rate in 2002-03 the first year of the Tenth Plan was negative (-6.8 per cent) which reflected the impact of the severe drought that adversely affected agricultural production in several States/regions in the country. Favourable weather facilitated revival of agricultural growth, which improved to 9.5% in 2003-04. However, in the subsequent year, i.e. 2004-05 serious deficiency in rainfall led to deterioration in performance in the agriculture sector, and as a result, growth rate in agriculture decelerated to 1.1 per cent. The inability of Indian agriculture to withstand weather related shocks mainly reflects the fact that there has been steady decline in public investment in real terms in agriculture, including allied sectors, over successive Five Year Plans. This in turn reflects decline in investment towards irrigation and water management.

With a view to increase agricultural production, Government has adopted a multi progned strategy for addressing specific segments of agriculture to ensure higher productivity. These initiatives are in the areas

of both cereal and non-cereal crops, horticulture, livestock, fisheries and dairying. Equal emphasis is also been given to timely availability of inputs and an overall thrust towards diversification into higher value produces and plantations. Initiatives taken towards these areas include launch of the National Horticulture Mission, undertaking activities with a Mission approach for enhancing productivity and quality of cotton, oilseeds, pulses and coarse grains. The Union Budget for 2005-06 has underscored the importance of providing enhanced credit coverage to the farming community as a consequence of which Rs. 1,15,242 Crores was disbursed in 2004-05. Credit flow to agriculture will be stepped up by another 30% in 2005-06. Initiatives has also been taken to include micro irrigation, enhanced provisions for the accelerated irrigation technology programme, strengthening of agricultural marketing infrastructure, development of backward and forward linkages through venture capital support and facilitations to growers association for producing larger and better quality of fruits, flowers and vegetables. Determined efforts are also being made to increase fisheries production largely through inland aquaculture. Livestock and Dairying have also received greater attention through enhanced budget outlays as well as defined policies towards cross-breeding and delineation of disease free zones.

SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Sir, the share of agriculture in the country in terms of GDP as well as the total merchandise exports has come down by around 3 per cent during the past three years. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what measures the Government has contemplated for promoting export of sugar and for restructuring imports of cotton and oilseeds.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, this is a very important supplementary. In its Mid-Term Appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan, the Planning Commission has projected the growth of GDP at 2001-02 prices in agriculture, inclduing allied sectors of forestry and logging and fishing, and it is going down. In 2005-06, they are expecting 4 per cent and in 2006-07, they are expecting 3.2 per cent. In 2002-03, it was -6 per cent. So, it is a not a very encouraging situation. There are a number of reasons for it, but one of the main reasons is that there is not enough public and private investment in the agriculture sector. If you study these public and private investments in the agriculture sector of the last few

years, suppose, we study from 1999-2000, out of the total share in investments, that is, the gross capital formation, in agriculture including forestry, logging and fishing, the private investment was .38 per cent in 1999-2000; in 2000-01, it was .34 per cent; in 2001-02, it was .40 per cent; in 2002-03, it was .33 per cent and in 2003-04, it was .36 per cent.

This is public investment. Private investment is somewhere around 1 to 1.5 per cent. So, the overall investment in agriculture is hardly 1 or 1.5 per cent, whereas 65 per cent of the population is dependent on agriculture. It is very difficult for the agricultural sector to face drought or floods and other such things. So, there has to be a conscious decision about investment in this area. Until and unless we take corrective action, I don't think we will be able to do justice in this area.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Medical and dental colleges

*286. SHRI LALITBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state.

(a) the number of self-financed and Government medical colleges and dental colleges in the country, State-wise, and their intake at 1st year M.B.B.S. level and 1st year of B.D.S.;

(b) whether it is a fact that many more self-financed medical colleges and dental colleges are in the pipeline;

(c) if so, the number of proposals pending with the competent authorities; and

(d) what is the action plan of his Ministry for more dental and medical colleges and to increase their intake?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS): (a) to (d) The number of medical and dental colleges in the country, State-wise with their intake is given in the Statement-I and II respectively (See below). It is for the State Government to assess the requirement of medical/dental colleges in the State while